

## **MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT**

To: Interested Parties

From: FWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime (406-461-0587)

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, April 17 – April 23, 2010

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2008 annual report) can be found on the FWP website.

NOTE: FWP has recently redesigned and reorganized its Website. The Wolf Program Home Page can be found at <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>. If you get an error page, go to the FWP Home page and look for Montana Wolves under Fish & Wildlife.

### **Wolf Monitoring Activities**

The Montana Wolf Program 2009 Annual Report, FWP Quick Facts about the report, and a media release are available at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>. The full report can be found by scrolling down the Wolf Program Home page to Reports // look for 2009 Annual Report or click on the photo link for 2009 Annual Report.

FWP documented the dispersal of a radio collared adult male from the Paradise Valley (8-Mile area) to the White Sulphur Springs area. The wolf was caught in mid-December 2009 originally. The wolf was killed 4/18 near Lennep (see Law Enforcement section below). It is not known whether the wolf has travelling alone or was affiliated with other wolves.

Flights: Laudon flew in northwest Montana 4/20-4/22.

### **Wolf - Livestock Activities**

On 4/20 WS killed an uncollared black and an uncollared gray wolf in the Superior pack and on 4/21 killed the collared alpha male, effectively removing the pack. FWP authorized the pack to be removed after they killed 4 miniature horses on March 19th. Six wolves total were removed from this pack.

On 4/21, WS killed a collared female wolf from the Horse Prairie pack that was seen chasing cattle on private land. The pack had previously been slated for removal and control work is now completed.

On 4/21, WS removed a gray unknown sex and age wolf from the Camas Prairie pack, and on 4/22 removed the remaining collared male from this pack. Control is complete.

On 4/22, WS removed NW221F, the only remaining radio collar left in the Fishtrap pack. Follow up ground work on 2/26 did not reveal any more wolf sign in the area. Control is now completed.

WS confirmed a calf as being killed by wolves on private land in the Cedar Creek pack territory (Madison Valley southeast of Ennis). WS had previously darted and collared 2 wolves from this area in March from a group of ~12. Area landowners have been seeing 10 -12 wolves consistently in the immediate area. WS was asked to remove 5 wolves from this large pack as livestock losses occur in this area historically. A permit was issued to the livestock owner. Three wolves have been removed by WS so far.

On 4/23, WS confirmed a calf was killed by wolves on private land southwest of Darby. The calf was killed by members of the Trapper Peak pack and as a result FWP authorized the removal of the remaining members of the pack. A yearling female from this pack was shot and killed by a rancher in this same area about a week and a half ago when it was caught chasing horses. The pack has a small home range and has been spending increasing time on private land in and around people and livestock. There have been numerous and increasing reports of wolves chasing/harassing livestock. The alpha male of this pack was killed last year when he was caught attacking a dog and at least 2 other dogs have been reported killed in the area. The pack killed a calf last year on the same ranch where the current depredation occurred and one wolf was removed at that time.

Neither FWP nor WS have received any new wolf reports from Carter County in southeast Montana after a wolf wearing an orange collar was harassed out of cattle on private land southeast of Broadus. No livestock were injured or killed at that time and none have been reported since. Local FWP staff are searching for missing radio-collared wolves in the area.

### **Outreach and Education**

On 4/23, Sime gave a presentation at the University of Montana Law School. About 80 people attended.

### **Research Activities**

Nothing to report.

### **Law Enforcement and Related Activities**

On 4/18, a wolf was shot on private land by a private citizen in the Madison Valley under the state defense of property statute. The incident was investigated by FWP and a warning was issued to the individual and FWP did a follow up visit.

On 4/18, a wolf was shot by a private citizen near Lennep on 4/18 under the state defense of property statute. It is under investigation by FWP.

### **Other Updates**

#### *Northern Rockies Delisting Litigation in Missoula Federal Court*

On 4/23, Judge Molloy announced a hearing date for oral arguments in the legal challenge of the USFWS decision to delist the wolf throughout the northern Rockies DPS except Wyoming. The hearing will be June 15 at 9:00am in the Russell Smith Courthouse in Missoula.

**Background:** Montana's interests in support of delisting have been represented and brought forward through efforts by FWP in consultation with the Montana Attorney General's Office. FWP filed its last written brief on 1/28. FWP argued that: 1. for a variety of reasons, it is lawful for USFWS to establish different levels of protection for a species, subspecies or Distinct Population Segment under the Endangered Species Act; 2. the facts show that Montana's existing regulatory mechanisms will keep

wolf populations well above the federal recovery criteria and encourage connectivity; 3. sufficient genetic exchange has taken place and will continue; and 4. Montana's hunting season is not a basis for relisting the gray wolf.

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

The Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board met on April 9<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was also broadcast on local access TV and streamed over the Internet.

Funding Update and two opportunities individual livestock owners can pursue:

1. The MLLRM program Board will be submitting paperwork to receive a \$140,000 grant from the USFWS. The USFWS is administering the grant opportunity under a new demonstration program designed to help livestock producers undertake proactive, non-lethal activities to reduce the risk of livestock loss from predation by wolves, or to compensate livestock producers for livestock losses caused by wolves. The Wolf Compensation and Prevention Program legislation was initially sponsored by Montana Senator Tester. The program provides funding to states and tribes, with federal cost-share not to exceed 50 percent. Montana will be able to achieve the necessary match requirement. The MLLRMB will determine how those funds are spent.
2. Leonard McArthur from the state FSA office spoke about a USDA program for livestock compensation due to wolf caused losses. The program is LDAP-20 and it has a very short sign up period. If you had wolf caused losses related to your livestock operation during either 2008 or 2009, please contact your local FSA office immediately. Certain restrictions apply to the LDAP-20 program. The sign up window is very short and likely only through the end of April. Contact your county FSA office as soon as possible to learn more.
3. Separately, USFWS announced the 2008 Farm Bill Endangered Species Tax Deduction opportunity. A provision in the 2008 Farm Bill allows taxpayers, who are engaged in the business of farming, to receive a tax deduction for expenditures paid or incurred for implementing actions benefitting the recovery of federally threatened or endangered (listed) species. To be eligible for the deduction, the expenditures must be for site-specific management actions recommended in approved recovery plans for listed species. The deduction for endangered species recovery expenses cannot be more than 25 percent of a farmer's gross income from farming. The Internal Revenue Service publishes a Tax Guide for Farmers (<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p225.pdf>) that includes information about the requirements for the endangered species deduction in Chapter 5 under Conservation Expenses. The Fish and Wildlife Service can provide information on the recovery plans for listed species including recommended recovery management actions contained in those plans.

The full agenda for this meeting is available at the Board's website [www.llrmb.mt.gov](http://www.llrmb.mt.gov). Look under Board and Meetings on the left navigation bar. The agenda and minutes from previous meetings are available at [Montana Department of Livestock](http://www.mt.gov/departmentoflivestock). The program coordinator can be reached at 444-5609.

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To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP online. Use the following shortcut link and be sure to update your bookmarks: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana at the statewide office: 657-6464. Or, call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock death loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp>. Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 444-5609.

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